COINQUEST, being a COUNTERMARK

... Publication for Collectors of: Countermarked, Cut and Holed Coins, Tokens and Medals; Siege and Necessity Pieces; Love Tokens; and, Numismatic Literature.

SEPTEMBER, 1975 VOLUME I, NUMBER 1

DEDICATION

To The Memory Of

GARLAND C. WYRICK

Numismatist, Friend

He might have disagreed with what I have to say, or with what I'm trying to do, yet, he would have encouraged me to **TRY** ...

****

The concept of Coinquest is essentially a search for the meaning of that elusive word, "Truth." The following friends have aided me in my personal search for the meaning ... each in his own, unique way. Not only have they furthered my numismatic education, they have enriched my life. To them also, Coinquest is dedicated.

Courtney L. Coffing, Sidney, Ohio
James H. Cohen, New Orleans, La.
Arthur B. Coole, Denver, Colo.
Grover C. Criswell, Citra, Fla.
Ervin E. Wittman, Aurora, Colo.

Three gentlemen I've never met, but have corresponded with over a goodly span of years, each of whom has been a "guiding light" in my quest for facts in the countermark field.

Ray Byrne, Delray Beach, Fla.
Maurice Gould, Tustin, Calif.
Maj. Fred Pridmore, Taunton, Somerset, England

I might not live up to their standards or expectations, but I will say, "I'll try, sir!"

Carling Gresham
Pomona Park, Fla.
15 August, 1975

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COLLECTORS' CIRCULAR

Texan Tells Tender Tale of Trials, Tribulations

By
Dick Day
Lohn, Texas

About three months ago my wife and I attended an auction sale in Coleman, Texas, to purchase items for our Collector's Shop, located in Brady, Texas. We had arrived early, planning to look for garage sales, but we hadn't met with much success.

On our way to a cafe at the edge of town we spotted a crude paper sign which pointed the way to a Garage Sale. We finally found the place, but all I could find to buy was a wooden mallet for pounding meat to tenderize it.

Owner Dick Day's "medal" as described in the accompanying article; Day diden't submit a photograph of the important aspect of his article, the meat mallet, therefore, readers will just have to "sniff the air" with their noses pointed in his direction, in hopes of smelling some of that "good Texas beef" that his wife might be pounding on at any given moment.

When you're in my wage bracket, you certainly need a big mallet to tenderize the beef I can afford. As our Collector's Shop hasn't broken out of the red in the three years since we opened it, I must work for a living and to support the shop.

Anyhow, as I was about to leave I asked the man if he had any old coins or tokens. He replied that he had an old coin, and he went into the house, and brought out his old coin.

I looked at it and told him that in my "expert opinion" it was a medal because it didn't have any value on it. (It's sure good to be an expert on things like that.)

The man said he appreciated the information, and then I asked him if he'd take five dollars for the thing. He said, "No," so we got in the car and went to eat.

While eating, I thought about the medal and wished I had offered the old man more money. Then it dawned on me ... I'd forgotten to get the mallet, which had been priced at two dollars.

After finishing the meal, we went back to talk to the old man. I asked him what he thought the medal was worth, and he said, "Ten dollars."

It was then that I decided to "make a big deal for it," so I offered him seven - fifty for the medal, but that fell on deaf ears; it seemed that I wouldn't get the medal after all.

Then it came to me ... I said to him, with a determined look in my eyes, "I'll give you ten dollars for the medal and the mallet." He thought for a minute or two, and finally agreed; I took the medal and the mallet and left.

This was one of the best "deals" I ever made in my life ... the medal is kinda' O.K., but that mallet is really something. Now all our beef looks like it had been run over by a tank, and it tastes about that good.

Coole Declares Chinese First With Coinage

About five years ago, Arthur B. Coole, Denver, Colo., claimed in a Coin World article that the Chinese had been the first to strike, issue and use coins, albeit in a form that Westerners are not accustomed to handling ... sword coins.

Coole has again appeared in print, (page 46, August, 1975, World Coins,) with his assertion that the Chinese used their "coins" as early as 1104 B.C. He backs his claim with quotes from contemporary historical literature, which is no less accurate or reliable than ancient Western histories.

Coole's reputation as a researcher of the highest integrity, along with his ability to read, write and speak several dialects fluently, combined with his reference library on Chinese numismatics, which just may be the finest in the world, add credence to his claim.

Many Westerners, for a variety of reasons, including vanity, may wish to refute Coole's claim, but, like it or not, that scholarly gentleman has presented "solid" evidence that the Chinese were about 350 years ahead of the Lydians as the "inventors" of coinage.

"Crowned V" Found On Guns, Coins

By
Carling Gresham

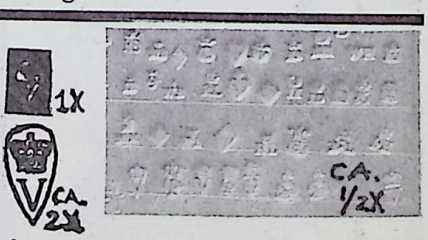
Several years ago, while working for James H. Cohen in New Orleans, the author encountered two rifles with "Crowned V" stamps on the barrels. Those marks are the same size and style as the countermarks found on several coins usually attributed to Canada.

The rifles were made between 1840 and 1850 in England. The marks are evidently "view marks," place thereon by inspectors, for the gunmakers' proof marks also were on the barrels.

Whether the "V" stands for Victoria or for "view" hasn't been determined, but the author still is corresponding with knowledgeable persons in England in an attempt to determine which is the correct answer.

Photographs of pencil rubbings of the barrels are submitted, along with a line drawing rendition of gun proof marks of England, and a photographic portion of the bronze touchplate of the Gunmakers' Guild of London.

It's to be hoped that the touchplate can be reproduced in its entirety in



the next issue, but the photograph is copyrighted, therefore, CQ is waiting for permission to reproduce.

It appears that anyone "paying" more than $25 for a "Crowned V" countermark would be wasting his money, although, any item is worth what it will fetch at any given time; no more, no less.

Peters' Library Sale "Mouth Watering"

The Jess Peters sale of the Ray Byrne and William Higgins libraries can best be described as "mouth watering" to the numismatic bibliophile, and especially to the countermark collector who has been trying to locate certain scarce or rare books to aid him in his research.

As Byrne collected countermarks for more than 25 years, his library is necessarily strong in references in that field; Higgins collected crowns for many years, and his library includes many books that cover the field of countermarks.

The quality and depth of references in the sale might be awesome to the average collector; he probably won't have the money to buy (bid) all the books and catalogs he needs or wants, and will find himself wondering, "... which books do I lay my money on, in the hopes of getting a few decent items?"

Peters doesn't use the highest bid unless it's absolutely necessary, therefore, those persons on a restricted budget might carefully select a few items, bid them generously, and back their bids with a percentage increase. Good luck.

The sale will be held in conjunction with the Illinois Numismatic Association Convention, Springfield, Ill., on September 25 - 28. Catalogs may be ordered from Peters at P. O. Box 123, Decatur, Ill. 62525.

An Introduction To Coinquest

By
Maurice M. Gould
Tustin, Calif.

There are many exciting areas and series of numismatics, but none have appealed to me as much as the collecting and attributing of counterstamped and countermarked coins. I truly have found this to be one of the most fascinating phases of our hobby.

Due to the lack of interest and research in this series, a great many pieces remained in the hands of the public and collectors, set aside with their oddball and unusual material, without any attempt at classification or attribution.

In more recent years, there have been a number of articles and booklets and special listings by several authors and collector involvement has increased. We are fortunate that Carling Gresham, who has long been interested in this field, will publish a paper on a regular basis. This is much overdue for this area of collecting.

Counterstamps may be divided into three primary categories:

1. To indicate official sanction or adoption as legal specie, which passed current as money (mostly in the West Indies and So. America.)
2. For advertising, symbolic or utilitarian purposes for merchants, fraternal organizations, political campaigns, admission requirements, etc.
3. For personal, random or testing purposes, such as those initialled by individuals or used for the testing of silversmiths' punches.

Those that passed current were counterstamped for three reasons:

1. To raise the value from one denomination to another.
2. To limit the circulation so they would not leave a particular area.
3. To guarantee the value at a certain fixed figure.

Coins of all denominations can be found with counterstamps and it is not unusual to make finds of unlisted or very rare pieces. As the field has not been too popular in the past, only of value to the specialist, the counterfeiter has not entered this area, as they have in many others, and this is still a good time to obtain many pieces before this sleeping giant awakens. Only a few hundred new collectors could clean up all the available supply and make many common pieces very difficult to obtain.

The stories behind many pieces are exciting to me and other collectors in this area. Years ago I purchased a 1901 U. S. half dollar which was counterstamped "Vive el Coco." Research showed that this piece was used in Puerto Rico to publicize the cocoanut and I hope to give you this story in a future column.

The counterstamp "Steamer Jewel" may be found on Liberty seated quarters. This steamer was a coastwise craft running from Portland, Maine to Gardner and then to Nova Scotia in the early 1900's.

Many of the advertising counterstamps show the patent medicines of the day and even a dentist, Dr. Kirstead of Boston, advertised on early bust half dollars.

Ray Byrne's collection, which came on the market recently in a wonderful Jess Peters' auction, gave collectors an opportunity to purchase pieces of the highest rarity. Byrne was especially strong in rarities of the West Indies and I doubt if there are any other private collections of this type with so many unusual pieces.

Over the years I have found that collectors in this area are also students and researchers and they are a fine group of people willing to help each other, as evidenced by this Coinquest, which is truly a labor of love.

This quartilla of Guanaxuato, dated 1856, carries an unusual countermark, in that the legend appears to be Tung or Jung, with a stop (period) after the "g;" note, though, that there's an "o" at 1 o'clock, above the "g." Owner Harry Bottenfield would like some help in attribution of the countermark.

About Those Coins On Page One

Collectors might wonder about those countermarked coins depicted on page one of this issue; so does the editor.

In future issues of CQ, it will be the practice to illustrate unknown countermarks on the front page. Anyone having any knowledge or leads about these countermarks is asked to forward that information to the editor.

Subscribers are urged to submit photographs of their "favorite enigma" for illustration on the front page. Glossy photographs, 4 x 5 inches or larger, are requested.

In the event a subscriber doesn't have a photograph, nor the means to do such work, ship the coin by registered mail to the editor, and he'll complete the work; please include return postage.

Modern Countermarks Of Thasos On Turkish Coins

By
Patrick D. Hogan
Iowa City, Iowa

(Reprinted from the Obol with permission of the author.)

The island of Thasos held a unique position in late Ottoman history. Early in the nineteenth century this far northern Aegean island had been given to Muhammad Ali, Viceroy of Egypt. One source[1] gives the date of transferrance to Egyptian governance as 1813. At any rate, the gift of the island by the sultan to the Khedive became official in 1841[2].

The gift was a sentimental gesture. The founder of the Khedival rulers of Egypt had been a native Albanian from Kavalla Thrace. It is said that he had received his start "as a sailor in this island."[3] It is also stated that Thasos is "where the viceroy's ancestors had once lived."[4]

Whatever the case, Muhammad Ali held an especial interest in Thasos, and in Kavalla, and the island and the **vakuf** of Kavalla became part of the Khedive's domains. Because of this, the inhabitants enjoyed "a considerable amount of independence, for with the exception of the retinue of the Bey and a few soldiers, there are no Mahometans resident among them."[5] "A Christian primate was elected as the assessor of "the Egyptian governor."[6]

With this unique situation in mind it would not take too much of a stretch of the imagination to place a reason for the following countermarked coins. On the one hand there is the well-known decline of Egyptian power following the death of Muhammad Ali's successor, Ibrahim, which eventually culminated in the British occupation. On the other, there are the equally well-known calamities which beset the Ottoman sultans in their European possessions. It is not surprising then that the island authorities found themselves politically and economically semi-independent in the last half of the nineteenth century.

Along with this semi-independence it must have been discovered that the normal sources of the coin for the island was cut off. Besides this, it is known that a general scarcity of small change throughout the Empire was felt at this time.[7] Thus, late in the century the ecclesiastical authorities on the island struck their own seal on Turkish coins which had been retired from circulation. Primarily, these were to be used in church collections, but they went into circulation, and were redeemable by the Church of issue.

The determination of the date of initiation of this system remains undiscovered. Hand in hand with this system of local Church countermarks a monetary system was devised. Those retired coins that were resuscitated for reissue were copper coins of 5, 10, 20 and 40 paras. These were issued at par, but called parades. The most important of the coins was the 40-parade piece, called bakira (from bakir equals bronze)

40 parades = 1 bakira = ½ grosi
33 bakiras = 1 metziti
155 bakiras = 1 louis dé
20 francs

177 bakiras = 1 pound Turkish
196 bakiras = 1 pound British

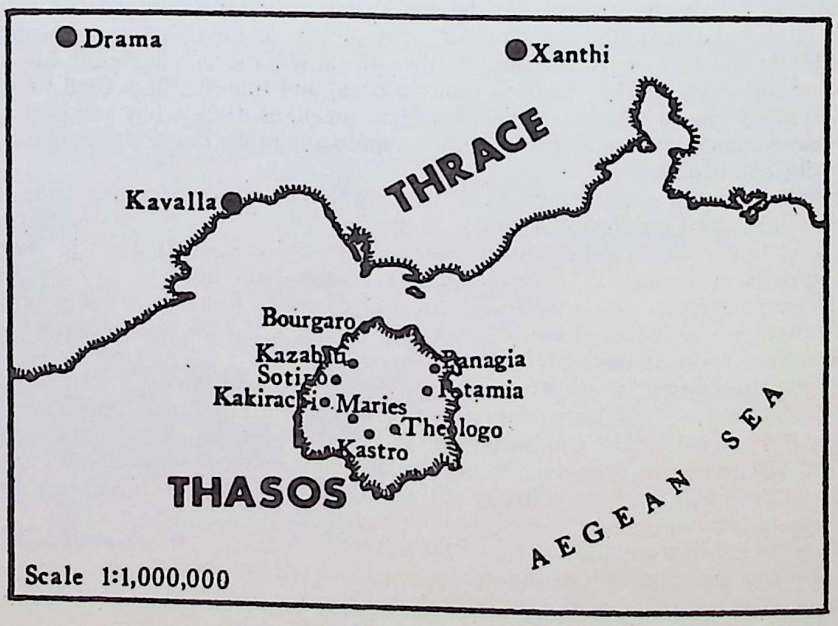
This system remained in effect until 1902. In that year the Turks culminated their attempts to encroach on Thasian autonomy with an accupation of the island, following a protest of the Thasians against new taxes. "And the Egyptian ascendency there was restricted to the woods and mines, a part of the **vakuf** of Kavalla, whose administrator is the Khedive."[9] The monetary system was, of course, suppressed "though one or two of the churches have evaded the order to return their seals."[10]

Tozer[11]. writing in 1890, claims that the coins "do not pass current outside of the area of that village" which struck the coins. However, Baker-Penoyre, in 1909, referring to Tozer's claim says, "apparently it was not long in use, as the coins now circulate freely."[12]

Nine inland villages are known to have countermarked Turkish coins. No known date as to when this system was initiated is yet discovered. The earliest dated piece has the partial date' 188-. The official end to the system is 1902, but apparently they remained in circulation years later.

The following list of the countermarks is accompanied with a tentative catalog for future reference. Those listings in **bold face** are not verified to date. A complete list of the coins used for countermarking may be of some

(Continued on Next Page)



Countermarks Of Thasos ...

(Continued from Preceding Page)

value to the numismatic world. I would appreciate hearing from collectors who have Thasian countermarked coins for a future definitive listing of this catalog to appear in this Circular: Patrick D. Hogan, 614 So. Johnson St., Iowa City, Iowa 52240. U.S. A.

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A CATALOG OF THE COINS

A. Vourgaro. Βούργαρο.

Ε|Β Ε(κκλησία) Β(ουργάρου)
Κ|Θ Κ(οίμησις) Θ(εοτόκου)

1. 5 parades.
2. 10 parades.
3. 20 parades. B-P. B C H
4. 40 parades.

B. Kakirachi, Κακηράχι.. ΚΑΔ
Κ(ακηράχι) Α(γίος) Δ(ημήτριος)
188-

5. 5 parades.
6. 10 parades.
7. 20 parades.
8. 40 parades. B-P

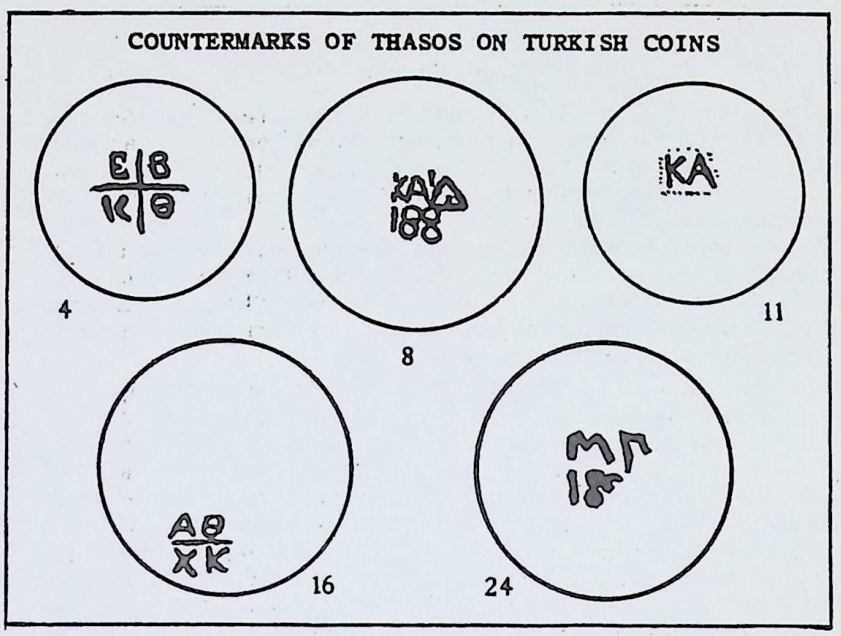
C. Kazabiti, Καζαβήτη. ΚΑ[Α]
Κ(αζαβήτη) Α(γίοι) Α(πόστολοι)

9. 5 parades. B C H
10. 10 parades.
11. 20 parades. B-P
12. 40 parades.

D. Kastro, Κάστρο.

Α Θ Α(θανάσιος)
Χ Κ Χ(ωριό) Κ(άστρο)

13. 5 parades.
14. 10 parades.
15. 20 parades.
16. 40 parades. B-P



E. Panagia, Παναγιά.

ΠΑΝΑΓΑ Παναγία
ΘΑΣΩ Θασιῶν
1893

17. 5 parades.
18. 10 parades.
19. 20 parades.
20. 40 parades. B-P, B C H, H

F. Maries, Μαριές.

Μ Π Μ(αριές) Π(αναγία)
18ρ

21. 5 parades.
22. 10 parades.
23. 20 parades.
24. 40 parades. B-P

G. Potamia, Ποταμιά.

Π Ε Π(αναγίας) Ε(κκλησία)
Χ Π Χ(ωριό) Π(οταμίας)

25. 5 parades.
26. 10 parades.
27. 20 parades.
28. 40 parades. B-P

H. Sotiro, Σωτῆρο. ΣΓΧ
Σ(ωτῆρο) Γ(έννησις) Χ(ριστοῦ)

29. 5 parades.
30. 10 parades.
31. 20 parades.
32. 40 parades. B-P

I. Theologo, Θεολόγος.

Α+Γ Α(γία)
ΤΡ Π(αρασκευή)

33. 5 parades.
34. 10 parades. B C H
35. 20 parades.
36. 40 parades B-P

B-P equals Baker-Penoyre.
B C H equals Bulletin de Correspondence Hellenique.
H equals Hadziotis, C. C., Turkish coins bearing Greek countermarks (Unknown emergency issues?) North American Journal of Numismatics, **Vol. 7, No. 1, Jan., 1968, pp. 13-16.**

Numismatic Book Club

Patrick Hogan, Iowa City, Iowa, editor of the Oriental Numismatic Society Newsletter, has informed CQ that he's operating a "numismatic book club" for persons desiring to purchase contemporary publications at a substantial discount.

Hogan indicated that the combined buying power of his membership entitled him to dealer discounts, which individuals seldom are able to obtain.

A one-time initiation fee of $10 is required, which gives Hogan his working capital; members then pay $2 per year for service. As new books are published he issues a book list that indicates the member price versus the retail price. Many members, he stated, recoup their initiation fee as a savings on their first purchase.

Countermark collectors interested in the recently published Countermarks of the Ottoman Empire 1880 - 1922, by Kenneth MacKenzie and Samuel Lachman, or, British Countermarks on Copper and Bronze Coins by J. Gavin Scott, are requested to contact Hogan at 614 South Johnson St., Iowa City, Iowa 52240.

Youth Relates Frustrations, Efforts Of First Article

By
Stewart Henderson
Farmington Hills, Mich.

(The author of this article is a sixteen - year old student who has been collecting "... about as long as I can remember, eight years I guess." He's a member of the ANA, MSNS and of the Love Token Society. His future plans include being a writer, an editor, and president of the U. S., not necessarily in order; this article gets him started partially, anyhow.

Editors normally edit to a standard of conformity, such as the AP or UPI stylebooks, or to a standard within their own minds, but this young man's article seemed to say, "Hands off!" else you'll lose the "bounce," the freshness ... outside of three errors, it remains as submitted, unchanged. The important thing to remember is that he's trying. — CG)

There I sat, perusing through my vast library of published material on counterstamps (two pamphlets and a half dozen articles,) in preparation for writing my first numismatic article. I noticed that others before me had made listings of counterstamps, but I planned to do something totally new and different. I would look deeper, and speculate why so many coins had been marked as they had. "How original!" I shouted to myself, and assured that I was in truly virginal territory, I turned to the very first page of Maurice Gould's fine pamphlet, Merchant Counterstamps on American Silver Coins, and read:

"Coins were counterstamped or countermarked for three basic reasons:

(1) To indicate official sanction or adoption as legal specie which passed current as money (mostly in the West Indies and South America).

(2) For advertising, symbolic or utilitarian purposes for merchants, fraternal organizations, political campaigns, admission requirements, etc.

(3) For personal, random or testing purposes such as those initialed by individuals or used for the testing of silversmith's punches, etc."

Good work, Maury. Thanks a lot. Mr. Gould had, in a paragraph, covered completely what I had hoped to write an entire article on. Needless to say, I saw my whole brilliant idea shoot gently down the tubes. Ah, but being a naive youngster, I decided to write at least a modified version of my article anyway, hoping someone out there will take pity on me and read it.

I will base my article on what Mr. Gould has said before me and also on the coins I have to illustrate what I'm trying to say. I will not discuss Mr. Gould's first catagory, since it covers generally just those exotic West Indian counterstamped Spanish Pieces of Eight, which fall out of my collecting realm, primarily since they cost a zillion dollars each. Long hours have I drooled over these pieces in dealers cases before moving on to junk boxes to scrounge for my own collecting specialty (cheap counterstamps that no one else wants.)

Mr. Gould's second category is a broad one, which includes nearly all of the nicer counterstamps. An example of a merchant's token is the fine counterstamp in figure 1. It's a 1797 penny of George III with "READ LLOYD'S PENNY SUNDAY TIMES" counterstamped in a ring around George's bust (now worn away.) How convenient having an ad for a paper on the very coin that could be used to purchase that paper!

Still in this same category, Mr. Gould mentions coins counterstamped for symbolic or political reasons. A classic example of this can be seen in figure 2. This is a 10 groschen piece of Austria, dated 1925, with a swastika counterstamped over the face of the lovely lady on the obverse. Talk about history on coins! This is one of the pieces that really got me interested in collecting counterstamps. (Official sanction of swastika countermarks remains to be proven. — CG)

Most of you have probably seen a coin like that shown in figure 3. It features the well - known "VOTE THE LAND FREE" counterstamp on a large cent of the 1839 - 1843 type. I show it for two reasons: 1) it is one of the very few American political counterstamps ("Vote the Land Free" was the presidential campaign slogan of the Free Soil Party in 1848,) and 2) it cost me an arm and a leg so I feel I have the right to brag about owning it.

The counterstamp on the piece in figure 4 is a common one also. It is the square and compass Masonic emblem, with a "G" in the center, on a 1948 Lincoln Cent. This was obviously used by the fraternal organization, but I've always wondered for exactly what purpose? Anybody out there know? I'd appreciate enlightenment.

Now, on to Mr. Gould's third and final classification. This is a sort of a catch - all, miscellaneous category, which includes not only those coins hacked up for no specific reason, but also some of the most varied and interesting pieces you're likely to come across. Figure 5 is some worthless old European coin, which, having been worn smooth, was apparently used by a silversmith to test his punch, as Mr. Gould suggests. I can't verify his theory, but it certainly seems to explain this and many other pieces.

I only have the coin in figure 6 in my collection because I found it in circulation, and I only include it here because it shows how counterstamps can be used for personal reasons. In

(Continued on Next Page)

Countermarks Target For Counterfeiters

By
Ulrich Schreier
Mannheim, Germany

No, dear reader, not all the countermarked coins are forged; if so, no one would care for this highly interesting subject. But, keep in mind, countermarks are more liable to counterfeiting than even the most primitive coins. The reason for it is rather simple.

Usually, countermarking was an act of utter need for the issuing authorities. Their connections with the rightful mint were severed, no fresh legal coinage was drifting in, but the local population was calling for currency of all denominations in order to maintain daily business. In general, foreign gold and heavy silver coins would do; but small cash was a problem in itself due to its insufficient intrinsic value.

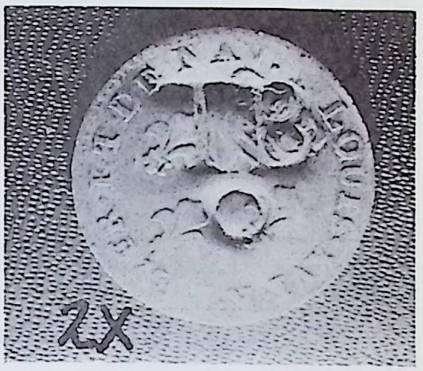
Lack of proper material, lack of minting installations, lack of expert die sinkers and other pertinent technicians obliged the local government to create some acceptable substitute! This could be done in various ways:

One of them was the melting down of all available scrap metal and sand casting coins. For this the famous cast brass Sol of 1795 of the fortress of Luxemburg (invested by the French Revolutionary Army November 21, 1794, to June 7, 1795) is a classical example.

A more convenient way was the collecting of obsolete and foreign copper coins — mostly worn down to mere copper discs already and legalize same by applying a more or less primitive countermark. And there you are!

A counterfeiter, wishing to make a profit by forging numismatically precious coins, will develop a technique as inexpensive for himself and as profitable in sale as ever possible. With some historical knowledge he will quickly select a few suitable worn coins from a lot destined for the melting pot; a handful for one or five cents!

To find the proper tools for an attractive countermark is an easy task,



One of many countermarks alleged to be from Tobago, described by Schreier.

and with few hammerstrokes a couple of worthless copper flans have been turned into a series of rather expensive countermarked coins! Of course, the counterfeiter would not trouble to cut the Guatemalean half real dies of 1894 to stamp a Carrera peso of 1859, because he could make a better and less dangerous profit by selling the coin without a countermark. But hear the author's experience in two typical cases:

In a list of a renowned Swiss coin dealer I found quoted a coin with a Tobago countermark, TB, ordered and got it. When seeing it I was shocked, recognizing a generally known counterfeit. True, Tobago used various countermarks and TB among them, incuse, on royal French coppers, Cayenne "black dogs" and stampees; but the letters are coarse and struck with one iron.

On the acquired coin, the letters were neat | and closely spaced, with fine serifs, obviously struck with two common letter - irons, contained in every mechanic's tool kit. By some odd chance, an auction sale of H. Schulman's contained a similar coin, clearly illustrated in the catalog and expressly earmarked "genuineness doubtful!"

I instantly returned my specimen to the Swiss dealer, accompanied by carefully compiled details proving it to be a fake. The dealer apologized,

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Youth Relates Frustrations ...

(Continued from Preceding Page)

this case, it's a very personal reason: the making of a profit, since I have seen these being sold for 50 cents (not bad - a 4900% return on the original investment.) I imagine some thought of commemorating a great man entered into the making of this piece, but I don't believe for a minute that that was the major motive behind it's issue.

I have another theory for you now; I may have read it somewhere, but anyway here it is. It concerns the piece in figure 7, which appears to be just a holed 1787 Spanish 2 real coin with "20" stamped on it.

But imagine that an American hotel keeper made a trip to Spain, say sometime in the mid - 1800's, and came across several interesting old Spanish coins, which no doubt could be gotten cheaply then. He brought them home, holed them so he could fit rings on them, and used them as exotic keyholders for his hotel keys. Of course, this is only one of the many possible explanations for the piece, but I think it's the best, and certainly the most interesting.

Figure 8 is the last coin, a counterstamped French 2 Sols of 1792. I collect love tokens in addition to counterstamps, and this piece seems to be a good bridge between the two fields. The counterstamp reads "JOHN GRAHAM MY BEST FRIEND." Obviously, this was a souvenir gift, and I must say I can't think of a better gift than a counterstamped coin! (The reverse reads, "T. C. to / R. J. Jennings / 1872")

Well, thanks for reading. I have neither the time nor the ability to do the extensive research necessary to create a really fine piece of work, so I figured I would do the next best thing: share with you what I've come across while collecting counterstamps. I hope you've enjoyed it and I hope you will do the same.

And finally, I would like to acknowledge Maurice Gould, and ask him not to sue me for quoting his pamphlet, relating his history of the "VOTE THE LAND FREE" piece, and borrowing his theory of the silversmith's trail punch. I've hated to depend on him so much, but he's all I have to go on since practically everything I know about counterstamps I learned from his writings.

CAVEAT EMPTOR!!

"Pirate Money" Of New Orleans

By
Carling Gresham

While on a trip to New Orleans recently I discovered a coin shop that wasn't there when I had last been in the city; it's the Gulf States Coin Exchange, located at 126 Royal Street.

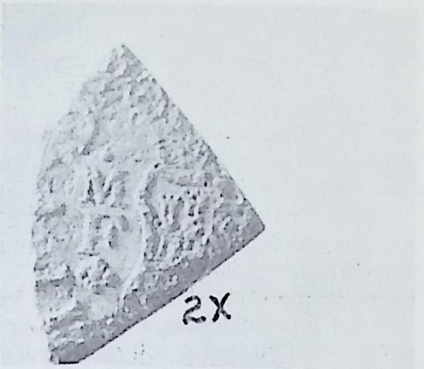
Viewing the coins on display in their front windows I noticed several cut pieces, advertised as "Pirate Money," that just didn't look right, so I went inside and asked the clerk if I might see them.

He handed three pieces to me with the comment, "We have a few more specimens if you'd like to see them."

"No," I replied, "I'll take this one," selecting the piece you see pictured here; I paid the young man $6.95 plus 42 cents tax for it.

It's a dark, gun-metal blue, Mexico City Mint, assayer "MF," and looks as if it had been made the week before by a rank amateur; I now know why it's frequently called "Pirate Money."

My sales slip, check, the "coin" and its holder are available for inspection by interested persons. "Proper" authorities were notified before I left the city.



A piece of "Pirate Money" from New Orleans, purchased by the author.

Schreier: Countermarks, Counterfeiters .....

(Continued from Preceding Page)

pointing out that the client, from whom he had acquired the coin, was known to him as a serious West India collector! Which only means, that the collector had fallen victim to an imposter.

About two years later, I ordered from a well-known American dealer, whose client I was for many years already, a half dollar countermarked by Costa Rica with its famous lion stamp. By some uneasy feeling I added, "Supposing it's not genuine?" "Of course, it is, but you may return it, if not satisfactory," was his fair reply.

The coin was a worn Liberty Seated Half Dollar of 1856, on the obverse showing the deeply impressed lion mark in excellent condition. Although the piece was a beauty, I was instantly alarmed by this combination. US half dollars had seldom been countermarked by Costa Rica, but they were known to exist. Most worrying, however, was the coin's late date, 1856, while the lion stamp had been used up to 1853 according to one source, to 1856 according to another.

But ... the condition of the coin testified to ten years' circulation at least, while the countermark was brand new and showing no traces of wear! Thus warned, I scrutinized the countermark, comparing it with all specimens of my own cabinet (i.e., Central American one-half and one reals, one-half and one escudos, British six pences and shillings, etc.) and carefully studying the pertinent literature.

I soon found out. There were three different stamps applied to gold and silver coins: (1) a small one of 5 mm diameter, used one-sided on silver coins (Federation and Costa Rica) only; (2) a slightly larger one of 6mm diameter, used double - sided on Federal gold of 1849 as well as one-sided on foreign (mostly British) silver; (3) a large 7mm stamp, used on the reverse of Colombian 50 cents (or 5-decimos) **only** together with the arms of Costa Rica on the obverse.

Number (1) was in use in 1849/52, Number (2) in 1853/56, and Number (3) in 1889 for the sole purpose of validating an exactly known number of Colombian . 835 coins (against the legal .900 standard of Costa Rica coinage!)

The designs are well distinguished by: (1) lion's head raised, single circle at outer stamp edge; (2) same, but lion's head straight; (3) lion's head straight, but double circle at stamp edge.

A Costa Rican countermark as described in Schreier's article.

Now, the acquired half dollar's countermark was number (3), meaning: the coin was genuine and the countermark genuine, but the countermarking itself definitely was a forgery!

Several numismatists have repeatedly asserted that one stamp must have survived ... in the wrong hands! Here was the proof. I returned the piece with all due explanation and it never reappeared in the dealer's lists.

Now, dear reader, you may think that I never again frequented those dealers who tried to "cheat" me. This is an error; I am still their client. You cannot blame the dealer for such an event. Even a first class numismatist cannot be a specialist for every odd piece of coined metal. His vast knowledged and experience is split up by dealing with thousands of certainly genuine coins in compiling his sales list. Staggering across a doubtful piece or one known to have been counterfeited before, he may briefly compare it with catalog illustrations and be contented; he cannot spare the time for itensified checking.

Here it is, that you have to **use your own wits!** And if you arrive at the conclusion that the coin in question is a fake, you return it with well-founded reasons. If the dealer takes it back and does not try to sell it elsewhere, all is quite honest and okay. On the other hand, if you don't feel able to disclose the features of a false countermark, consult a neutral expert to show you what's wrong.

Plastics And Coins

By
James A. Brown
Newark, N. J.

The problem of displaying coins to view and at the same time keep them from tarnishing has been studied by experts for some time. The ideal display case would be one that is pre-surised with an inert gas such as helium or argon pumped into it under pressure, which would be relatively safe from outside contaminents.

This method is not new and is standard practice by our military in shipping vital or strategic parts to humid climates. It is to be noticed that this plan is for the collector who is advanced far enough to afford both the fine collection and its specialized protection.

For the series, the type collector, and the late proof and mint display it would be prohibitive in price and impractical to set aside space for pre-surized projects. There are other ways of protecting coins with a minimum of deterioration or tarnish for a period of time.

A good three piece inert plastic case with the coins set in cutouts in the center piece with plenty of stout compensating screws of brass or stainless steel will do a very good job in preventing tarnish without impairing the view or detracting from the esthetic value of the display; on a long time basis of scarcity or of its normal yearly percentage increase, it can at any time be removed with ease, and can stand considerable handling.

After years of experience with various kinds of plastics and compositions and their eccentricities and shortcomings, I would say there are a number of important points to keep in mind when the hobbyist is making a home project of plastic exhibition holders, for coins in the finest of condition. The most important, of course, is that he have machine shop experience, for some of the Do-it-yourself kits on the market today are very flimsy and in fact downright dangerous to the novice and can lop off a finger just as easy as they cut plastic.

There are now so many lawsuits on this account that one company recently went out of business. Working with plastic is one of those pursuits where there are lots of personal injury risks with little chance of commercializing the product, for the business seems to be dominated by a few giants of industry. But there is always room for a good one, an inventor or new ideas as in any line of business or profession.

(Continued Next Issue)

CQ Countermark

Latest word from H. Alvin Sharpe about dies for a CQ countermark is that he has been "snowed under" lately, therefore, is behind schedule with the project.

He hasn't forgotten CQ, though, and we should be able to offer a concrete proposal to subscribers in the next issue.

WANT ADS

WANTED: Counterstamped, punched or engraved coins & tokens, especially of Georgia or Atlanta. R. C. Davis, Box 1046, Douglasville, Georgia, 30314.

* * * * * * * *

WANTED: Did you buy any of Byrne lots 1245-48? Help with attribution. Send full description (including date) or foil impression to: Robert Leonard Jr., 1065 Spruce St., Winnetka, IL 60093.

* * * * * * * *

TRADES: Will trade merchant CMKS on U. S. and foreign coins, mostly unattributed, for your duplicates or same. Robert Leonard, Jr., 1065 Spruce Street, Winnetka, IL 60093.

* * * * * * * *

MAIL BIDS: U. S. & foreign. We have monthly sales and are in need of your business. Consignments or buy outright. MAPLE CITY COIN, Box 38, Monmouth, IL 61462.

* * * * * * * *

Brunk Begins CMK Bibliography

A 20-page bibliography of world countermarks by country, (ancient medieval and modern,) by Gregory G. Brunk, will begin in the next issue of CQ.

In the meantime, CQ readers may write Brunk for photo copies of appropriate sections they'd like to have. There's no charge for the information, but CQ would like to suggest that requests include ample postage to cover his copying fees and mailing costs.

Brunk's address is: 1022 Ora, Waterloo, Iowa 50701.

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Hallenbeck ...

(Continued from Page 10)

Logansport, Ind. was so enthused with the talk he went home and got a counterstamped coin and gave it to me. It was an 8 reales of Mexico City mintage with a counterstamp P. HUFFMAN / WARSAW, / IND. It is very definitely my favorite counterstamped coin. I researched it and wrote an article for the ISNA News, the quarterly publication of the Indiana State Numismatic Association. Perhaps some day in the future we can repeat that article for this fine publication.

There is no end to the fascination of counterstamped coins. I could go on and on, but have rambled enough for this issue. There are specific topics which can be researched and articles written. I've done quite a bit of research on Yankee Robinson, so perhaps sometime in the future I'll get that published. Old Yank was quite a boy.

Best of luck to Carling in his attempts to weld us together with our common interest, counterstamped coins.

Author Reveals "Start" Of Countermark Collecting

By
Kenneth L. Hallenbeck, Jr.
Fort Wayne, Ind.

"How did you ever get started collecting counterstamps?"

This question has been asked of me a number of times, and when Carling Gresham asked me to write something about counterstamped coins, not having much time for research and effort with the ANA elections and all at the moment, I decided to just rattle off something. Hope this may give something as food for thought.

My very first counterstamped coin was a DEVINS & BOLTON / MONTREAL on a large cent. I have no idea how this coin came into my possession, but have had it for a number of years. It was in with my "junk." One day I just happened to be rummaging through my "junk" and there it was.

I can't recall just what caused me to take a second look at the thing, but vaguely guess it may have been an article on counterstamped coins by Maury Gould. He's always writing those short articles for various publications, and I'm one of those guys who cuts them out and files them away for future reference. Well, anyhow, I attempted to look for more counterstamps and was on my way from that point on.

Incidentally, I prefer the use of the terminology "counterstamp" as opposed to the terminology "countermark." You'll find that almost all of the older literature uses "countermark" and some of the more educated of the current crop of authors and experts use "countermark." I guess it isn't really very important what word you choose, they both mean the same thing essentially. "Counterpunch" seems to be less used than the other two words, and it does have its place.

When first collecting counterstamped coins I could get them a good deal cheaper than at present. Who couldn't? This has been perhaps 15 to 20 years ago. I suppose we all can look back and remember some of the "goodies" we have cherry picked out of some dealer's junk box for a mere pittance. Don't we wish we could do it more often?

Personally, I seem to have more luck with my "odd ball" type of collecting at flea markets and antique shows. Antique dealers usually have a few coins, medals, and tokens, and every now and then they have a counterstamped coin.

Most coin dealers by now have a fairly good idea that counterstamped coins aren't junk and we pay accordingly. However, most antique dealers don't know counterstamped coins and if high priced, I've been able to "dicker" them down rather successfully.

Then, of course, there are the cases where the counterstamp is underpriced, and .... slurp, that's where we get our bargains, right? Unfortunately, this doesn't happen often enough.

Acquisition of counterstamps, or anything for my collection generally is directly related to the amount of effort, I've put forth in attempting to add to my collection. That is, you've just got to get out and search the bushes. In traveling I try to stop at antique and junk shops, used furniture dealers, etc. The junkier the better, much to the disgust of my wife:

"You're not going to go into THAT place are you?"

"I'll only be a minute!"

"Hah! Well, I'LL wait in the car!"

"Can I go in with you Dad?"

"Sure!"

My three sons love to hunt like I do. I also collect old checks, stock certificates, tokens, and expired plastic and metal credit cards and World War OPA ration tokens and books.

Another thing I'm always on the lookout for is a token from the same issuer of a counterstamp. In the two or three thousand different counterstamps that I have, there are only two or three pairs of this nature, so they are a bit rare.

COINQUEST
P. O. Drawer 580
Pomona Park, FL. 32081

One of the best "buys" I ever made was at a nearby coin show in Logansport, Ind. some years back. A group of us went to the show; during a lunch break one of our carload showed me a half dollar he had picked up in a holder with the counterstamp YANKEE ROBINSON and a civil war storecard of the same person. He had paid $8 for the pair. When I showed interest and asked what he would take for the set he said $10. Well, I couldn't get the money out of my pocket fast enough! Life has its little ups and downs, and that was one of ups!

A number of years back one of the fellows at our company was a photography nut, who wanted me to build him a box in which he could use his flash and take pictures of very small objects like coins. I struck up a deal with him to photograph a number of my counterstamped coins in exchange for my making the box. I paid for the film and he took perhaps 125 to 150 pictures for me in both color and black and white.

I made up a nice set of 35mm color slides of counterstamped coins of all periods and of different types and went around to different coin clubs giving a talk on counterstamps. It was a lot of fun and led eventually to invitations to speak at our state coin convention and to the Central States in Chicago some years back. I have the slide set, but haven't given the talk in some time now. Fortunately, my photographer friend was good, so the slides are excellent.

On one of the numerous occasions where I gave my slide talk on counterstamped coins a member of the local coin club, one Marion Watson of

(Continued on Page 9)

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